

1 STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA  
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16

**FILED**

APR 24 2012

STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE  
SAN FRANCISCO

STATE BAR COURT  
HEARING DEPARTMENT - SAN FRANCISCO

12 In the Matter of: ) Case No. 11-O-17752 [11-O-18487; 11-O-  
13 ) 18519]  
14 WILLIAM HENRY BULLIS, )  
15 No. 99160, ) NOTICE OF DISCIPLINARY CHARGES  
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A Member of the State Bar

**NOTICE - FAILURE TO RESPOND!**

IF YOU FAIL TO FILE A WRITTEN ANSWER TO THIS NOTICE  
WITHIN 20 DAYS AFTER SERVICE, OR IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR AT  
THE STATE BAR COURT TRIAL:

- (1) YOUR DEFAULT WILL BE ENTERED;
- (2) YOUR STATUS WILL BE CHANGED TO INACTIVE AND YOU  
WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PRACTICE LAW;
- (3) YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE FURTHER IN  
THESE PROCEEDINGS UNLESS YOU MAKE A TIMELY MOTION  
AND THE DEFAULT IS SET ASIDE, AND;
- (4) YOU SHALL BE SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL DISCIPLINE.  
SPECIFICALLY, IF YOU FAIL TO TIMELY MOVE TO SET ASIDE  
OR VACATE YOUR DEFAULT, THIS COURT WILL ENTER AN  
ORDER RECOMMENDING YOUR DISBARMENT WITHOUT  
FURTHER HEARING OR PROCEEDING. SEE RULE 5.80 ET SEQ.,  
RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA.

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1 The State Bar of California alleges:

2 JURISDICTION

3 1. William Henry Bullis ("respondent") was admitted to the practice of law in the State  
4 of California on December 1, 1981, was a member at all times pertinent to these charges, and is  
5 currently a member of the State Bar of California.

6 COUNT ONE

7 Case No. 11-O-17752  
8 Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A)  
[Failure to Perform with Competence]

9 2. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A), by  
10 intentionally, recklessly, and repeatedly failing to perform legal services with competence, as  
11 follows:

12 3. In or about February 2010, Salvacion Celones ("Celones") employed respondent to  
13 file and prosecute a Chapter 13 bankruptcy petition.

14 4. On or about March 31, 2010, respondent filed the petition in case number 10-28359-  
15 E-13L, United State Bankruptcy Court, Eastern District of California.

16 5. Thereafter, respondent:

- 17 • failed to diligently prosecute the bankruptcy case;
- 18 • incorrectly advised Celones about her obligation to make payments on the  
19 proposed Chapter 13 Debtor's Plan. Celones made payments on the plan but,  
20 because of respondent's incorrect advice, began making these payments a month  
21 late and was therefore delinquent;
- 22 • failed to properly serve the Debtor's Plan on all interested parties;
- 23 • failed to make a motion to confirm the Debtor's Plan as required by bankruptcy  
24 court procedures;
- 25 • failed to respond to bankruptcy trustee's motion to dismiss the petition; and
- 26 • failed to appear at the hearing on the motion to dismiss.

27 6. On or about July 27, 2010, the bankruptcy court granted the trustee's petition to  
28 dismiss the case.

7. Thereafter, respondent promised Celones that he would refile the case. However, respondent failed to refile the bankruptcy case and, instead, abandoned Celones's case.

8. By failing to diligently prosecute the bankruptcy case, incorrectly advising Celones about her obligation to make payments on the proposed Chapter 13 Debtor's Plan, failing to properly serve the Debtor's Plan on all interested parties, failing to make a motion to confirm the Debtor's Plan, failing to respond to bankruptcy trustee's motion to dismiss the petition, failing to appear at the hearing on the motion to dismiss, failing to refile the case after promising to do so, and abandoning Celones' case, respondent intentionally, recklessly, and repeatedly failed to perform legal services with competence.

COUNT TWO

Case No. 11-O-17752  
Business and Professions Code, section 6106  
[Moral Turpitude]

9. Respondent wilfully violated Business and Professions Code, section 6106, by committing acts involving moral turpitude, dishonesty and corruption, as follows:

10. The allegations contained in Count One are hereby incorporated by this reference.

11. In or about late January 2011, respondent falsely told Celones that he had refilled the bankruptcy case. Thereafter, and continuing into July 2011, respondent made a series of misrepresentations to Celones to the effect that the bankruptcy case was proceeding, that court dates had been changed or delayed, and that specified bankruptcy trustees had been assigned. In furtherance of his misrepresentations, respondent also requested that Celones make monthly payments of \$950 to respondent. Respondent falsely told Celones that the monthly payments would be used to satisfy Celones obligations under the fictitious Debtor's Plan.

12. By making the above-mentioned misrepresentations to Celones, respondent committed an act involving moral turpitude, dishonesty or corruption.

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1 COUNT THREE

2 Case No. 11-O-17752  
3 Business and Professions Code, section 6106  
4 [Moral Turpitude]

5 13. Respondent wilfully violated Business and Professions Code, section 6106, by  
6 committing acts involving moral turpitude, dishonesty and corruption, as follows:

7 14. The allegations contained in Counts One and Two are hereby incorporated by this  
8 reference.

9 15. Based on respondent's request, in or about February through June, 2011, Celones  
10 gave respondent five \$950 money orders for a total of \$4750. At least two of the money orders  
11 did not have a specified payee written on them and thus could have been cashed by anyone. To  
12 date, respondent has not returned any of these money orders to Celones, has not used them for  
13 Celones' benefit, but as of April 16, 2012, has not cashed any of them.

14 16. By collecting these money orders under false pretenses and by failing to return them,  
15 respondent committed acts of moral turpitude, dishonesty and corruption.

16 17. Respondent's failure to return the money orders constitutes a conversion of Celones'  
17 property and therefore constitutes an act of moral turpitude, dishonesty and corruption.

18 COUNT FOUR

19 Case No. 11-O-17752  
20 Business and Professions Code, section 6068(m)  
21 [Failure to Respond to Client Inquiries]

22 18. Respondent wilfully violated Business and Professions Code, section 6068(m), by  
23 failing to respond to reasonable status inquiries from a client in a matter in which respondent  
24 had agreed to provide legal services, as follows:

25 19. The allegations contained in Count One are hereby incorporated by this reference.

26 20. After June 18, 2011, respondent failed and refused to respond to Celones' status  
27 inquiries. Specifically, respondent received but did not respond to emails from Celones sent on  
28 August 16, 2011 and August 24, 2011. The latter email stated that her wages had been garnished  
by creditors and requested a return of the money orders.

1 21. By failing to respond to the August 2011 status inquiries, respondent failed to respond  
2 to reasonable status inquiries from a client in a matter in which respondent had agreed to provide  
3 legal services.

4 COUNT FIVE

5 Case No. 11-O-17752  
6 Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 4-100(B)(3)  
[Failure to Render Accounts of Client Funds]

7 22. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 4-100(B)(3), by  
8 failing to render appropriate accounts to a client regarding all funds, securities and other  
9 properties coming into respondent's possession, as follows:

10 23. The allegations contained in Counts One, Two and Three are hereby incorporated by  
11 this reference.

12 24. The circumstances of respondent's abandonment of Celones' matter gave rise to a  
13 duty requiring respondent to provide an accounting to Celones as to the money orders respondent  
14 had received.

15 25. To date, respondent has not provided an accounting to Celones.

16 26. By failing to provide an accounting, respondent failed to render appropriate accounts  
17 to a client regarding all funds, securities and other properties coming into respondent's  
18 possession.

19 COUNT SIX

20 Case No. 11-O-17752  
21 Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(D)(2)  
[Failure to Refund Unearned Fees]

22 27. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(D)(2), by  
23 failing to refund promptly any part of a fee paid in advance that has not been earned, as follows:

24 28. The allegations contained in Counts One and Two are hereby incorporated by this  
25 reference.

26 29. Celones paid respondent \$1,300.00 in advance attorney fees to handle the Chapter 13  
27 bankruptcy matter.

30. Respondent withdrew from employment when he ceased performing services and ignored his client's status inquiries.

31. Respondent never earned the attorney fees he received from Celones and owes Celones a substantial refund.

32. To date, respondent has not made any refund to Celones.

33. By failing to make any refund to Celones, respondent failed to refund promptly any part of a fee paid in advance that has not been earned.

COUNT SEVEN

Case No. 11-O-17752  
Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(A)(2)  
[Improper Withdrawal from Employment]

34. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(A)(2), by failing, upon termination of employment, to take reasonable steps to avoid reasonably foreseeable prejudice to his client, as follows:

35. The allegations contained in the prior counts are hereby incorporated by this reference.

36. Respondent withdrew from employment when he ceased performing services and ignored his client's status inquiries.

37. Respondent failed to take any steps to protect Celones from foreseeable harm, such as garnishment of her wages (which actually happened in August 2011).

38. By abandoning Celones' legal matter and failing to take steps to protect Celones' legal interests, respondent withdrew from employment without taking reasonable steps to avoid reasonably foreseeable prejudice to his client.

## COUNT EIGHT

Case No. 11-O-18487  
Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A)  
[Failure to Perform with Competence]

39. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A), by intentionally, recklessly, and repeatedly failing to perform legal services with competence, as follows:

1 40. On or about January 6, 2011, John and Nicole Arabia (the Arabias), husband and  
2 wife, employed respondent to represent them in a bankruptcy matter. They paid respondent  
3 \$1,000.00 in advance as his attorney fee.

4 41. Thereafter, despite repeated contacts from the Arabias, respondent failed to file the  
5 bankruptcy matter and failed to perform any services for the Arabias.

6 42. By failing to file the bankruptcy and failing to perform any services for the Arabias,  
7 respondent intentionally, recklessly, and repeatedly failed to perform legal services with  
8 competence.

9 COUNT NINE

10 Case No. 11-O-18487  
11 Business and Professions Code, section 6068(m)  
[Failure to Respond to Client Inquiries]

12 43. Respondent wilfully violated Business and Professions Code, section 6068(m), by  
13 failing to respond to reasonable status inquiries from a client in a matter in which respondent  
14 had agreed to provide legal services, as follows:

15 44. The allegations contained in Count Eight are hereby incorporated by this reference.

16 45. In or about September 2011, the Arabias scheduled an appointment to meet with  
17 respondent on September 23, 2011. Respondent cancelled that appointment on short notice and,  
18 thereafter, refused to communicate with the Arabias.

19 46. During the following month, the Arabias left 20 or more voicemail messages for  
20 respondent, and sent respondent an email and a letter, all requesting that respondent  
21 communicate with the Arabias concerning their legal matter. Respondent received these  
22 communications but failed to respond in any way.

23 47. By cancelling the September 23 meeting and failing to respond to the Arabias'  
24 subsequent voicemail messages, email and letter, respondent failed to respond to reasonable  
25 status inquiries from a client in a matter in which respondent had agreed to provide legal  
26 services.

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48. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 4-100(B)(3), by failing to render appropriate accounts to a client regarding all funds, securities and other properties coming into respondent's possession, as follows:

50. The circumstances of respondent's abandonment of the Arabias' matter gave rise to a duty requiring respondent to provide an accounting to the Arabias as to the \$1,000.00 respondent had received.

52. By failing to provide an accounting, respondent failed to render appropriate accounts to a client regarding all funds, securities and other properties coming into respondent's possession.

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53. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(D)(2), by failing to refund promptly any part of a fee paid in advance that has not been earned, as follows:

55. Respondent withdrew from employment when he ceased performing services and ignored his clients' status inquiries.

57. To date, respondent has not made any refund to Arabias.



1 58. By failing to make any refund to the Arabias, respondent failed to refund promptly  
2 any part of a fee paid in advance that has not been earned.

3 COUNT TWELVE

4 Case No. 11-O-18519  
5 Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A)  
6 [Failure to Perform with Competence]

7 59. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A), by  
8 intentionally, recklessly, and repeatedly failing to perform legal services with competence, as  
9 follows:

10 60. On or about April 26, 2011, Eric Lopez and Regina Lopez ("the Lopezes"), husband  
11 and wife, employed respondent to file and prosecute a Chapter 13 bankruptcy petition. The  
12 Lopezes paid respondent in full for these services by paying \$400.00 in advance attorneys on or  
13 about April 26, 2011, an additional \$1,000.00 in advance attorney fees on or about May 20,  
14 2011, and an additional \$293.00 for filing fees on or about June 12, 2011.

15 61. On or about June 12, 2011, respondent filed the petition in case number 11-34659-C-  
16 13L, United State Bankruptcy Court, Eastern District of California, and appeared at the creditors'  
17 meeting on or about July 21, 2011.

18 62. Thereafter, respondent

- 19 • failed to diligently prosecute the bankruptcy case;
- 20 • failed to properly serve the Debtor's Plan on all interested parties;
- 21 • failed to make schedule a motion to confirm the Debtor's Plan as required by  
22 bankruptcy court procedures;
- 23 • failed to file a motion to value the secured claim of a creditor to which the  
24 petitioners proposed to discount;
- 25 • failed to respond to the bankruptcy trustee's July 28, 2011 motion to dismiss;
- 26 • failed to appear at the hearing on the motion to dismiss; and
- 27 • completely abandoned the Lopezes' legal matter.

28 63. On or about September 8, 2011, the bankruptcy court granted the trustee's petition to  
dismiss the case.

64. By failing to diligently prosecute the bankruptcy case, failing to properly serve the Debtor's Plan on all interested parties, failing to make a motion to confirm the Debtor's Plan, failing to respond to bankruptcy trustee's motion to dismiss the petition, failing to file a motion to value the secured claim of the creditor, failing to appear at the hearing on the motion to dismiss and abandoning the Lopezes' legal matter, respondent intentionally, recklessly, and repeatedly failed to perform legal services with competence.

COUNT THIRTEEN

Case No. 11-O-18519  
Business and Professions Code, section 6068(m)  
[Failure to Respond to Client Inquiries]

65. Respondent wilfully violated Business and Professions Code, section 6068(m), by failing to respond to reasonable status inquiries from a client in a matter in which respondent had agreed to provide legal services, as follows:

66. The allegations contained in Count Twelve are hereby incorporated by this reference.

67. Between on or about September 9, 2011, and September 23, 2011, the Lopezes left about six voicemail messages requesting that he communicate with the Lopezes concerning their legal matter. Respondent received these communications promptly after they were made. Respondent's only response was to send the Lopez an email on September 23, 2011, stating that he was out of town but would contact them when he returned. Thereafter, respondent failed to communicate further with the Lopezes, despite receiving six more voice mail messages from the Lopezes between on or about September 28, 2011, and on or about October 16, 2011.

68. By failing to substantively respond to the Lopezes voicemail messages, respondent failed to respond to reasonable status inquiries from a client in a matter in which respondent had agreed to provide legal services.

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1 COUNT FOURTEEN

2 Case No. 11-O-18519  
3 Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 4-100(B)(3)  
4 [Failure to Render Accounts of Client Funds]

5 69. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 4-100(B)(3), by  
6 failing to render appropriate accounts to a client regarding all funds, securities and other  
7 properties coming into respondent's possession, as follows:

8 70. The allegations contained in Counts Twelve and Thirteen are hereby incorporated by  
9 this reference.

10 71. The circumstances of respondent's abandonment of the Lopezes' matter gave rise to a  
11 duty requiring respondent to provide an accounting to the Lopezes as to the funds respondent had  
12 received.

13 72. To date, respondent has not provided an accounting to the Lopezes.

14 73. By failing to provide an accounting, respondent failed to render appropriate accounts  
15 to a client regarding all funds, securities and other properties coming into respondent's  
16 possession.

17 COUNT FIFTEEN

18 Case No. 11-O-18519  
19 Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(D)(2)  
20 [Failure to Refund Unearned Fees]

21 74. Respondent wilfully violated Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(D)(2), by  
22 failing to refund promptly any part of a fee paid in advance that has not been earned, as follows:

23 75. The allegations contained in Counts Twelve and Thirteen are hereby incorporated by  
24 this reference.

25 76. Respondent withdrew from employment when he ceased performing services and  
26 ignored his clients' status inquiries.

27 77. Respondent never earned the attorney fees he received from the Lopezes and owes  
28 them a substantial refund.

78. To date, respondent has not made any refund to Lopezes.

1 79. By failing to make any refund to the Lopezes, respondent failed to refund promptly  
2 any part of a fee paid in advance that has not been earned.

3 COUNT SIXTEEN

4 Case Nos. 11-O-17752; 11-O-18487; 11-O-18519  
5 Business and Professions Code, section 6068(i)  
6 [Failure to Cooperate in State Bar Investigation]

7 80. Respondent wilfully violated Business and Professions Code, section 6068(i), by  
8 failing to cooperate and participate in a disciplinary investigation pending against respondent, as  
9 follows:

10 81. At all pertinent times, the State Bar was conducting an investigation into the matters  
11 described in the previous counts.

12 82. On or about January 12, 2011, a State Bar investigator sent respondent three letters of  
13 inquiry—one concerning the Lopez matter, one concerning the Celones case, and one concerning  
14 the Arabia matter. Each of these letters of inquiry asked respondent to provide a narrative  
15 response to the allegations and to provide specified documents.

16 83. Respondent received each of these letters shortly after they were sent.

17 84. However, respondent failed to respond to the letters in any way, and has failed to  
18 otherwise cooperate and failed to participate in the State Bar's investigations of these matters.

19 85. By failing to respond to the letters of inquiry and by failing to otherwise cooperate  
20 and participate in the State Bar's investigation of these matters, respondent failed to cooperate  
21 and participate in disciplinary investigations pending against respondent.

22 **NOTICE - INACTIVE ENROLLMENT!**

23 **YOU ARE HEREBY FURTHER NOTIFIED THAT IF THE STATE BAR  
24 COURT FINDS, PURSUANT TO BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE  
25 SECTION 6007(c), THAT YOUR CONDUCT POSES A SUBSTANTIAL  
26 THREAT OF HARM TO THE INTERESTS OF YOUR CLIENTS OR TO  
27 THE PUBLIC, YOU MAY BE INVOLUNTARILY ENROLLED AS AN  
28 INACTIVE MEMBER OF THE STATE BAR. YOUR INACTIVE  
ENROLLMENT WOULD BE IN ADDITION TO ANY DISCIPLINE  
RECOMMENDED BY THE COURT.**

**NOTICE - COST ASSESSMENT!**

**IN THE EVENT THESE PROCEDURES RESULT IN PUBLIC  
DISCIPLINE, YOU MAY BE SUBJECT TO THE PAYMENT OF COSTS**

1 INCURRED BY THE STATE BAR IN THE INVESTIGATION, HEARING  
2 AND REVIEW OF THIS MATTER PURSUANT TO BUSINESS AND  
3 PROFESSIONS CODE SECTION 6086.10.

4 Respectfully submitted,

5 THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA  
6 OFFICE OF THE CHIEF TRIAL COUNSEL

7 DATED: April 24, 2012

8 By: 

9 Donald R. Steedman  
10 Senior Trial Counsel  
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1                    **DECLARATION OF SERVICE BY CERTIFIED AND REGULAR MAIL**

2   **CASE NOS.: 11-O-17752 [11-O-18487; 11-O-18519]**

3   I, the undersigned, over the age of eighteen (18) years, whose business address and place of  
4   employment is the State Bar of California, 180 Howard Street, San Francisco, California  
5   94105, declare that I am not a party to the within action; that I am readily familiar with the  
6   State Bar of California's practice for collection and processing of correspondence for mailing  
7   with the United States Postal Service; that in the ordinary course of the State Bar of  
8   California's practice, correspondence collected and processed by the State Bar of California  
9   would be deposited with the United States Postal Service that same day; that I am aware that  
10   on motion of party served, service is presumed invalid if postal cancellation date or postage  
11   meter date on the envelope or package is more than one day after date of deposit for mailing  
12   contained in the affidavit; and that in accordance with the practice of the State Bar of  
13   California for collection and processing of mail, I deposited or placed for collection and  
14   mailing in the City and County of San Francisco, on the date shown below, a true copy of the  
15   within

10                   **NOTICE OF DISCIPLINARY CHARGES**

11   in a sealed envelope placed for collection and mailing as ***certified mail, return receipt***  
12   **requested**, and in an additional sealed envelope as ***regular mail***, at San Francisco, on the date  
13   shown below, addressed to:

13                   **Article No. 7196 9008 9111 2191 1659:**

14                   William Henry Bullis  
15                   301 Georgia Street, Suite 309  
16                   Vallejo, CA 94590

15                   **Article No. 7196 9008 9111 2191 1666:**

16                   William Henry Bullis  
17                   301 Georgia Street, Suite 312  
18                   Vallejo, CA 94590

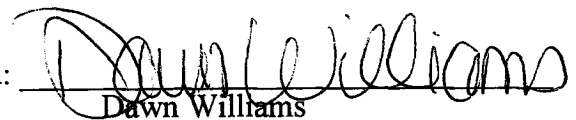
18   in an inter-office mail facility regularly maintained by the State Bar of California addressed to:

19                   N/A

20                   I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the  
21   foregoing is true and correct. Executed at San Francisco, California, on the date shown below.

22   DATED: April 24, 2012

22   Signed:

23                     
24                   Dawn Williams  
25                   Declarant